

Developing a targeted English-language curriculum and materials for Latino caregivers of infants with special needs as part of a NICU pre-discharge education program

Authors:

- Ulla Connor: International Center for Intercultural Communication, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI
- Rylin Rodgers: Family Voices Indiana
- Ana Traversa: International Center for Intercultural Communication, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI
- Jennifer Akers: Family Voices Indiana
- Esen Gokpinar-Shelton: International Center for Intercultural Communication, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI
- Matt Lorch: International Center for Intercultural Communication, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Research project and grant title: “Targeted Language Instruction for Limited English Proficiency Latino Families of Infants with Special Needs,” which is funded by the Community Health Engagement Program (CHEP): Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CTSI) with supplemental support from The Binational/Crosscultural Health Enhancement Center (BiCCHec) at IUPUI.

Organizations conducting the research project:

- International Center for Intercultural Communication (ICIC), IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI
- Family Voices Indiana (FVI)

Healthcare disparities in the Latino community are well documented; Latino infants with special healthcare needs are at high risk of mortality or poor health outcomes and have difficulty obtaining specialty care. Poor English-language skills add an additional layer of vulnerability. Existing health-related English-language curricula address adult, not pediatric health concerns. A clear need exists for short-term health-related English-language education programs to develop survival communication skills in low-literacy Limited English Proficiency (LEP) caregivers.

International Center for Intercultural Communication (ICIC) and Family Voices Indiana (FVI) are collaborating to develop and facilitate a targeted English-language curriculum for LEP Latino caregivers of infants with special healthcare needs at Riley Children’s Hospital. ICIC brings expertise in English-for-Specific-Purposes (ESP) program development; FVI serves parents of children with special healthcare needs, including LEP parents, and brings the ability to make such a program meaningful and useful to our target population.

The first stage of the project is currently ending, and has featured

- Needs-analysis data collection onsite through the observation of current education modules with Latino parents at Riley Hospital as well as surveys of relevant healthcare providers and other hospital staff, followed by
- The development of a curriculum, instructional materials, and pre-post intervention assessments based on the identified needs.

The second stage will feature the actual intervention and will involve working with a minimum of six (6) low-literacy/low-proficiency caregivers to

- Improve their health-related English for the specific purposes of communicating with their infants’ physicians and other healthcare staff while at Riley,
- Facilitate communication after discharge,
- Increase their readiness to engage in community ESL classes, and
- Ensure eventual adaptability of the curriculum for ESL caregivers of various language backgrounds, stronger language or literacy skills, a variety of healthcare contexts, and the larger pediatric population.

The post-intervention stage will feature data analysis with the purpose of assessing the viability of the curriculum and materials, and will lead to revisions. ICIC will also train FVI facilitators to offer the program to the population they serve. ICIC will then work with Indiana University Research and Technology Corporation (IURTC) to copyright and license the final curriculum and materials.